(c) the time by which the commission is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Water Resources have recently set up a High Powered Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development Plan. The objectives are to optimise benefits resulting in use of available water for different purposes like drinking, irrigation, power generation, navigation, industrial and other uses.

The terms of reference of the Commission are as follows :

(a) To prepare an integrated water Plan for development of water resources for Drinking, Irrigation, Industrial, Flood Control and Other uses.

(b) To suggest modalities for transfer of surplus water to water-deficit basins by inter-linking of rivers for achieving the above objectives.

(c) To identify important Ongoing Projects as well as New Projects which should be completed on priority basis together with phasing.

(d) Identify a technological and inter-disciplinary plan for the water sector with a view to maximise the benefits.

(e) To suggest physical and financial resource generation strategies for the water sector.

(f) Any other related issue.

(c) The Commission is likely to submit its report by September, 1998.

United Nations Conference on Housing

154. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether at a United Nations Conference on Housing held at Islamabad in mid-June 1996, an Indian proposal for raising resources for improving the standards of rural housing was adopted;

(b) if so, the precise Indian proposal and the form in which the same was adopted; and

(c) the steps being contemplated by the Government for improving rural housing in India in light of the said decisions of the United Nations Conference on rural housing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Several NGOs, who attended the Habitat-II Conference in Istanbul in June, 1996, brought to the notice of the Indian delegation that the draft Habitat did not make much mention regarding policies of rural development although many countries in the developing world are predominantly rural. Based on India's intervention the Habitat Agenda recognised that rural and urban development policies and programmes are inter-dependent and that, in addition to improving the urban habitat, Governments must work to extend adequate infrastructure, public services and employment opportunities to rural areas in order to enhance their attractiveness, develop an integrated network of settlements and minimise rural-to-urban migration, specially focusing on small and medium-sized towns.

(c) The Government has identified rural housing as one of the thrust areas to tackle the problems in a time bound manner.

World Habitat Day

155. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether October 18, 1996 was observed as the World Habitat Day this year also;

(b) if so, the specific programmes and schemes launched in observance of the day for rural areas; and

(c) the estimated number of persons without any abode in rural areas as at the beginning of the 8th Five Year Plan and at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. This year October 7, 1996 was observed as the World Habitat Day.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) According to 1991 census, rural housing shortage in India at the beginning of the Eighth Five Year Plan was 13.72 million houses consisting of 3.41 million households without houses and 10.31 million living in unserviceable houses. The present rural housing shortage is of the order of about 17 million houses consisting of about 6.7 million households without houses and about 10.3 million households living in unserviceable houses.

[Translation]

Reservation Policy

156. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) the postwise break-up of reserved posts for SC and ST lying vacant in various departments and undertakings under this Ministry till date;